

In the Abstract

Please add the following Abstract (also attached on a separate sheet at the end of this preliminary amendment):

--This invention relates to the use of a filler derived from cereal husk, more particularly rice husk, in composite materials to enhance the flame retardant, antistatic, accelerator, plasticiser and blowing characteristics in various composite materials.--

In the Claims

Please rewrite claims 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 14, and 16 as follows:

5. (Amended) A process according to claim 3 wherein said process utilizes fresh rice husk as the vegetative material.

6. (Amended) A filler according to claim 1 when produced by a process comprising burning a fresh vegetative-based material, ground to a particle size from 100 mesh to 400 mesh, at about 803° to 804° C for 3 to 4 seconds.

7. (Amended) A method for improving the anti-static, flame retardant, accelerator, plasticiser and/or blowing characteristics of a composite material wherein said method comprises blending into the composite material with a carbonized vegetative-based filler according to claim 1 and wherein said blending is substantially completed prior to incorporation of any additives, if any.

9. (Amended) A method according to claim 7 wherein the composite material is latex (NR/SR) the dosage of the carbonized vegetative filler is from 1.5 to 2.5 phr (parts per hundred).

10. (Amended) A method according to claim 7 wherein said composite material is selected from the group comprising:

- i) thermoplastic resins;
- ii) thermoset plastics;

- iii) rubbers and elastomeric materials;
- iv) conductive coatings;
- v) printing inks;
- vi) bitumen; and
- vii) concrete.

11. (Amended) A composite material having improved anti-static, flame retardant, accelerator, plasticiser and/or blowing characteristics wherein said composite material is produced by the method of claim 7.

14. (Amended) A method according to claim 12 wherein the rice husk and tyre crumb is mixed in composition with a palm oil effluent prior to it being added to the bitumen.

16. (Amended) A method according to claim 14 wherein the composition is added in a dosage amount of about 20% by weight of the said bitumen.

On page 22, please delete lines 23-29.

REMARKS

In view of the foregoing amendments, consideration and favorable action are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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